

Belstead Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 13th May 2015 in the Village Hall at 7.30pm.

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from, Robin Wraight and Roger Harrison

MINUTES: The minutes of the meeting held on 7th May 2014 were adopted as a true record and signed by the Chairman of the meeting David Cobbold.

MATTERS ARISING: All matters arising had been dealt with by the parish council during the year

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REPORTS:

Chairman's report. Cllr David Cobbold gave the following report. The year starting May 2014 was dominated by the Wind Turbine application, much as in the preceding 3 years. Thankfully there was a halt to the work of researching, producing and presenting our views when the planning application was refused on December 17th which is an important date as the 6 months period allowing PFR to appeal will be up on June 17th and there has been no sign of an appeal following the General Election result which PFR may have been waiting for.

I have given thanks to many people who have worked on our behalf and this has been published in our Parish Council Newsletter

In other matters following complaints a motor cycle restrictor was installed at the entrance to the footpath leading to Banks Hills from the main street last Autumn and there have been no further complaints to date.

In March the Parish Council made a first response to the proposed new Joint Babergh and Mid Suffolk Local Plan. There will be further consultations on this most important development which when finalised will be the planning bible for many years to come.

I would finally like to thank all members of the Belstead Parish Council for their work and support over these last 4 intensely busy years. We have said goodbye to Peter Jones who has retired from Babergh District Council and our council. A tribute was paid to him at our last meeting in March and published in our Council newsletter.

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County Council:

Cllr David Busby gave the following report. Obviously most services have been delivered to a reasonable standard, but generally it has been a difficult year. The Council is committed to 4 years of zero council tax increases which significantly impacts on income whilst the Government continues to slash its contribution. Delivering quality services with a reduced income and growing demand is going to be a tough ask for anyone, especially if your attention is being diverted by internal squabbling by the controlling party.

Young People

The council has continued with its plans to close middle schools, smaller village primary schools and some children's centres. More and more schools are switching to academies where the council's influence is significantly reduced – the jury is out on whether these schools are more successful than LGA run ones. Performance wise we continue to languish towards the bottom of league tables with the 'Raising the Bar' initiative being ineffective.

However, this year there should be much greater involvement by the school improvement team with the heads, so there is some hope for a positive outcome.

The new apprentice scheme has been hugely successful with thousands taking up the opportunity to get 'hands on' experience. Perversely this has had a negative impact on the colleges who provide vocational subjects, with numbers reduced and some courses cancelled as a result.

School transport remains a problem for many with high bus fees encouraging more car journeys with student cars causing car parking problems.

Adult Care

It is fair to say that there have been teething troubles in the transfer of adult care services from the County to CareUK, especially in the opening of a couple of new care homes. There are a number of new initiatives planned for the coming year which we hope will work but the key is to combine health and social services.

Roads

The contract for road maintenance passed to Kier MG and they started with a backlog of work and a 'mountain' of potholes requiring repair. They seem to have got on top of this and the reporting system is allowing everyone a chance to bring problems to their attention.

The traffic light works, in and around Ipswich, seemed to take forever and caused huge amounts of disruption and delays. However the new phasing is operational and it seems to be doing what it is designed to,

Arts & Culture

Despite a reduction in grants from SCC Suffolk is one of the best supported and admired counties for culture and the arts. Each £1 SCC gives it drags in over £10 in grants from other sources. As part of our heritage attraction we need to keep supporting these institutions.

Other

The rollout of broadband continues at a pace with many communities now able to benefit from faster speeds.

The change in leadership amongst the ruling party could well lead to a change of strategy across the council – we wait to see what this may be.

District Council:

The hard copy report from the District Council has been placed in the file copy of these minutes. Once again Cllr Peter Jones was thanked for his time as a District Councillor and also as a Parish Councillor at Belstead.

Village Hall : Hall bookings remain steady and plans are in place to have the hall redecorated.

Cameo Club: 'Come and Meet Everyone' meet monthly on a Monday afternoon in the village hall. There have been a number of visits this year from the coffee caravan, an evening meeting in the summer is planned as well as possibly an evening singalong of Christmas tunes in December. It is a very sociable afternoon and everyone is very welcome.

Craft Club: The craft club meets monthly on a Friday evening at the Village Hall where a number of different crafts are tried. The evenings are fun and friendly and everyone is very welcome.

Belstead Consolidated Charities: David Cobbold gave the following report.

Trustees are Peter Hands, Rev Annette Shannon and myself.

The welfare state has largely superseded this charity but it could still be useful at times of crisis for someone in Belstead. The income has diminished a little to less than £40 a year and the current funds stand at £704.

Garden Club: Sadly after a number of years the Garden Club ran by John Hayward had been disbanded earlier in the year, however a number of people have come forward and plans are being put in place to create a new Belstead Garden Club which will hopefully be up and running later this year.

Bowls Club: John Hayward had sent the following report. We have enjoyed another successful season however the main problem is the lack of players and anyone interested can contact any member of the club and everyone is very welcome to come along on a Tuesday evening to have a go.

St Mary's PCC and Friends: Ken Windsor and Robin Wraight had sent the following report .2014/15 has been an eventful year with the completion of almost all works connected with the conservation of the roodscreen and the successful installation of the two manual organ. Our congregations have been steady and we have welcomed several new people to our monthly services. As ever, Christmas and Harvest Festival recorded our highest attendances.

The organ project has opened up useful space for serving refreshments but we still need to develop kitchen and toilet facilities and we aim to make a start to funding this during the coming year.

The recent Jumble Sale raised a record £770 for church fabric funds and the annual Plant Sale to be held on 23rd May will we hope be comparably well supported. The annual church yard spring clean will be held shortly and as ever thanks are due to Mick Potter and David & Celia Cobbold for their regular churchyard mowing.

Weddings and Baptisms have continued and more are booked for the coming year.

Electoral role steady at 21. Average service attendance during October 2014, 19.

We welcome Roger Harrison to the role of Treasurer and record our thanks to Barrie Spring for his sterling efforts in the job. Claire Guernari has taken on the task of PCC Secretary from Roger Harrison, to whom a further vote of thanks is due and thanks also to Robin Wraight for his excellent work in the role. PCC members are as follows; Church Wardens Ken Windsor & Robin Wraight, Treasurer Roger Harrison. Members: Barrie Spring, Richard & Valerie Clift, Zandra Cobby, Ernie Dawson and our Chairman, Rev. Annette Shannon

Residents. It was requested that a motorcycle restrictor be purchased by the parish council to be placed on the footpath which runs beside Belstead Hall. It was agreed to place this as an item on the next Parish Council agenda.

The progress of the Mains Sewerage project was mentioned

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.50pm